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Susan Stone & Roger Levine Residence, 671 State Road, West Tisbury, MA

Special Permit Narrative

Project Description:

Stone Family History.

Charles Stone, applicant's father, purchased 671 State Road in August of 1967. For years Eve Stone, applicant's mother, operated an antique shop from the outbuilding since converted to a detached bedroom and studio. The house is in sore shape, and now Susan wishes to restore and expand upon its Greek Revival architecture.

1. Background History.

a. Main House.

The Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System (MACRIS) dates this Greek Revival single family dwelling as circa 1850 and notes that it was moved from 7 Gates Farm to its current location at 671 State Road (date of move unknown).

The MACRIS data sheet notes that the house is "about 60' from the road on a landscaped lot", with major alterations "fireplace on north side", that there are outbuildings "small shed and antique shop".

The 1850 main house retains most of its original Greek Revival trim elements, including its front door surround, broad entablature at the eaves and layered projecting rake trim.

b. Main House Ell.

There is a kitchen ell, attached to the rear of the main house.

This ell has been dated by an historic consultant architect, given its sawn lumber and framing method, as from 1925-1935, so as not meeting the 100 year historic MVC review threshold.

c. Detached Bedroom.

The detached bedroom consists of two attached structures.

The western garage structure was built in the late 1940s. The eastern structure was built as an attachment in the late 1950's when the two pieces were converted into an antiques shop. The shop was converted into a detached bedroom in the late 1980's.

d. Sheds

There are two outbuildings on the lot; one garden shed at 176. s.f and one 19 s.f. garden shed.

e. Beech Tree.

A significant feature at 671 State Road is its magnificent Copper Beech Tree.

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1. Background History, continued.

f. "Village" Context.

There is a cluster of Greek Revival houses along this northern stretch of State Road in West Tisbury. Most share a common relationship to State Road in they are set back approximately 50' (with the exception of # 697 at approximately 20'); also, they all have gable ends of similar width and height and roof pitch and they all face their main front gable ends toward State Road.

Most have ell extensions or additions added after the the fact to the side and rear of the original main house, plus detached barns and/or outbuildings set towards the rear of their lots. Most if not all buildings in this cluster are nonconforming in re today's setbacks.

The Greek Revival houses in this cluster share common proportions in that their gable ends have similar width, height and roof pitch. These gable ends share fenestration patterns in that there are typically two windows and a main entry door at the first floor (with some exceptions, notably the side entrance at #667) and two symmetrically placed windows at the second floor.

The houses also share Greek Revival trim elements to a greater or lesser degree, depending on how much they were altered over time. Most original windows with their 6 over 6 lites patterns have been replaced, often with an 8 over 8 lites pattern. Many retain their corner piers that support a broad eave entablature band and projecting layered rake trim at the gable ends. Some have the classic Greek Revival detail of the small vent windows inset within the broad entablature (i.e. #671 & #667).

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2. Proposed Renovations/Additions.

a. Main House.

The Greek Revival Main House will remain and is to be restored, bringing it back as close as possible to its original 1850 state. The 8 over 8 replacement windows are to be removed and replaced with wood 6 over 6 double hung windows. The exterior trim elements will be restored where necessary. The house is to be temporarily lifted so that the compromised rotted sills and floor joists can be replaced and so that a full-height foundation can be placed underneath. The house is then to be lowered onto its new foundation, in its original location. The original granite foundation wall stone is to be retained and is to be used to face the new foundation.

The 1950's era front stoop and kitchen porch are to be removed and replaced with stoops with graceful metal railings and, in the case of the kitchen entry, a one-story side entry porch. The small rear kitchen ell from the 1925-1935 era is to be removed.

The 1950s brick chimney is to be removed. A shed dormer will be added to give the middle bedroom some viable headroom, light and air.

b. Main House additions.

New additions are proposed at the side and rear of the Greek Revival house; these are arranged in an additive fashion so as to honor the original. A new one-story side entry porch is to replace the 1950s era front stoop and kitchen porch. Behind the one-story entry porch and to the rear of the original house is to be a new two-story addition above-grade with a walkout basement below. To the rear of the two-story addition is to be a one-story screen porch. The existing garden shed is proposed to be rotated 90 degrees so as to buffer the walkout from #667.

The exterior trim details and proportions and windows of the proposed new additions are to match and complement those of the Greek Revival original.

Area calculations have been made to ascertain the extent of alterations of the Existing Historic Circa 1850 house and are shown on the attached worksheet with its accompanying exhibits, drawings marked up to show the area of existing walls and roofs to remain and the area of existing walls and roofs to be absorbed. These calculations were done two ways, "A" & "B", with "B" being most conservative.

Both resulted in area absorbed being under the 25% threshold for MVC referral;

"A" at 19% absorbed with 81% remaining, and "B" at 24% absorbed with 76% remaining.

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2. Proposed Renovations/Additions, continued.

c. Detached Bedroom.

The existing detached bedroom is to remain, on its current footprint. It is to be renovated and is to have a bathroom installed; the bathroom is to be connected to the new septic system. A new 2-car garage is proposed to be added to the street face of the detached bedroom, allowing for covered parking.

The garage addition presents its gable form toward State Road. Originally the garage had sets of doors with 6 lites per panel; this door design is to be repeated. The garage and detached bedroom are to have much-simplified versions of the exterior trim used at the main house. The windows are to be mostly 6 over 6 double hung wood windows, with a few wood awning windows also.

The wooden slat storm door at the rear of the building is retained from the original.

The combined detached bedroom with garage building is to have exterior trim elements that are complementary but subordinate to the trim elements at the main house, much reduced in size and detail, as befits an outbuilding.

The property line stockade fence along the eastern side lot line is to remain.

d. Sheds.

There are two outbuildings on the lot; one garden shed at 176. s.f & one 19 s.f. garden shed.

The existing 176 s.f. garden shed is proposed to be rotated 90 degrees so as to buffer the walkout from #667.

The 19 s.f. garden shed is to remain as-is.

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3. Site.

e. Copper Beech Tree, site trees.

A signature feature at 671 State Road is its magnificent Copper Beech tree, located just back from the front lot line at about the midpoint of this lot line, near State Road. The tree will not be disturbed, except where its roots may meet the foundation of the house.

Every effort will be made to protect this tree. The tree will be fenced off during construction. It will be drip-watered. The building lifter Bob Hayden has been to the site and he assures us he won't need to get near the tree.

The new well is sited so as not to interfere with the beech tree's roots.

Most other trees along the driveway and at the rear of the lot are to remain and are to be protected. The exception are the evergreens at the rear of the lot that are to be removed to accommodate the septic system.

f. Septic System/Bedroom Count.

The current main house has five bedrooms; when finished the main house with its addition will have four bedrooms. The existing detached bedroom is to remain. A new Title V septic system designed by Vineyard Land Survey is to be installed at the rear of the lot. Thus the bedroom count proposed reduces from the original six to the proposed five.

g. Driveway/Parking

The driveway curb cut is to remain. The driveway is to remain as peastone. The driveway is reconfigured to allow access to the proposed two-car garage and for turning/parking.

h. Utilities.

The new propane tank location is within the shrubs placed along the curving driveway edge. The new HVAC units and the generator are to be placed within a fenced enclosure to both buffer sound and shield the units from view; this wooden enclosure to be placed along the rear wall of the original detached bedroom.

i. Fencing.

Existing stockade fencing along both side lot lines will remain.

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4. Permitting.

a. 4.4-8 Residential Building Size Bylaw.

The existing plus proposed Residential Floor Area (RFA) is 3,391 sq. ft.
(see attached worksheet)

The proposed existing plus proposed Supplementary Floor Area (SFA) is 770 sq. ft.
(see attached worksheet)

b. 11.1-3 Extension or Alteration

A. The Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) may grant a Special Permit to allow a non-conforming structure or use to be extended or altered, provided that the ZBA finds that the extension or alteration is not substantially more detrimental to the neighborhood than the existing non-conforming structure or use.

c. 4.3-3 Exceptions to Lot Frontage "and Setback" Requirements

D. The Board of Appeals may, after a public hearing, grant a special permit to build, alter or extend a structure at a location having less than the minimum setback or frontage distances specified above in Section 4.1 if, in its opinion, such use will not have a material detrimental effect upon the established and future character of the neighborhood and the town; and provided further that the Board of Appeals finds that other lots in the neighborhood have been previously developed by the construction of buildings or structures in such a manner to have resulted in similar non-conformities and that the proposed construction would be in character with the general pattern of development in the neighborhood and would conform to the dimensional standards previously and generally employed.

1. "Village" Context.

There is a cluster of Greek Revival houses along this northern stretch of State Road in West Tisbury. Most share a common relationship to State Road in they are set back approximately 50' (with the exception of # 697 at approximately 20'); also, they all have gable ends of similar width and height and roof pitch and they all face their main front gable ends toward State Road.

Most have ell extensions or additions added after the the fact to the side and rear of the original main house, plus detached barns and/or outbuildings set towards the rear of their lots. Most if not all buildings in this cluster along the northern portion of State Road are nonconforming in re today's setbacks.

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2. Historic Renovation

The existing original Greek Revival house is to be sensitively restored, with its unfortunate twentieth century alterations removed and replaced with historically accurate elements. This restoration will also address rot at the sills and floor frame.

3. Additive Additions

The proposed additions are additive, placed to the side and the rear of the original Greek Revival main house in the same manner as the other houses in the neighborhood with additions and outbuildings.

The additions continue the proportions, elements and details, complementing the original Greek Revival at 671 and its neighbors along State Road.

4. Pre-existing nonconformity.

671 State Road shares with others in its neighborhood pre-existing nonconformities in re lot size and setbacks; this makes for a small as-of-right building envelope at 671.

a. The proposed additions to the main house are less non-conforming than the original:

The proposed one-story side entry is wholly within the as-of-right envelope.

The proposed two-story addition behind the one story side entry is 75% within the as-of-right envelope; its eastern edge is set back from the eastern side lot line 2'-4" further than the eastern edge of the original Greek Revival house.

The proposed one-story screen porch to the rear is 70% within the as-of-right envelope; its eastern edge is set back from the eastern side lot line 6'-0" further than the eastern edge of the original Greek Revival house.

b. The proposed relocation of the eastern existing garden shed extends its existing nonconformity but does not increase its nonconformity.

The proposed relocation is meant to extend the buffer from the basement walkout from the eastern neighbor.

c. The addition of the proposed garage extends the existing nonconformity of the detached bedroom but does not increase the nonconformity.

The existing detached bedroom is set at a slight angle to the western side lot line; in order to attach the garage addition to the detached bedroom in a parallel and perpendicular manner and not increase the nonconformity, the western wall of the proposed garage is jogged 10" further away from the western side lot line.

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5. Site.

The magnificent Copper Beech tree, plus most other trees on the lot, will remain & will be protected.

Adequate off street parking is planned for.

A new Title V septic system will be installed.

A new well is to be installed..